

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-07 EA-06 FRB-03 INR-07 NEA-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01

OPIC-03 SP-02 TRSE-00 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01

SS-15 NSC-05 L-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 STR-01 /105 W

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R 221827Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO JDEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7511

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, UK, EC PINT

SUBJECT: FOOT COMMENTS ON EC MEMBERSHIP ISSUE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: MICHAEL FOOT, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EMPLOYMENT, AND A CONFIRMED ANTI-MARKETEER, SAID HE WAS

CONFIDENT THE REFERENDUM WOULD RESULT IN A VOTE AGAINST
CONTINUED BRITISH MEMBERSHIP IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.
FOOT MADE THESE AND OTHER POINTS DURING THE COURSE OF A
MEETING TODAY (JANUARY 22) WITH A SMALL GROUP OF LONDON
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BASED LABOR ATTACHES. (HIS VIEWS ON THE ECONOMY WILL

BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.) END SUMMARY

2. THE EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY, ANTICIPATING HE SAID, SOME, ALTHOUGH NOT ALL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR THE EC REFERENDUM, TO BE ANNOUNCED BY MR. WILSON IN PARLIAMENT TOMORROW (JANUARY 23), ADDED THAT HE EXPECTED THE CABINET TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION ON THE ISSUE AND THAT IT WAS LIKELY THAT THIS WILL BE DONE BEFORE THE LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE. HE SAID THAT THE CABINET MEMBERS WILL BE ALLOWED -- FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1932 -- TO GO AGAINST A CABINET RECOMMENDATION "WHICHEVER WAY IT GOES." HE BELIEVES THAT THERE WILL BE FROM 4 TO 7 CABINET MEMBERS (OUT OF 23) -- AND POSSIBLY MORE -- WHO WILL OPPOSE A FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION. HE ACCEPTED THAT FOUR OF THEM INCLUDED, IN ADDITION TO FOOT HIMSELF, ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN, PETER SHORE, AND BARBARA CASTLE, BUT HE DID NOT CLEARLY INDICATE WHO THE OTHER THREE MIGHT BE.

3. HE SAID THE REFERENDUM, AS WIDELY REPORTED, WILL BE HELD IN JUNE, AND THAT THE LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD AT A DATE TO BE MADE FINAL LATER BUT WHICH WOULD FOLLOW THE END OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, PRESUMABLY AFTER THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING IN MARCH. HE SAID IT HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED WHETHER THE REFERENDUM WOULD BE ON A NATIONAL BASIS, BY CONSTITUENCIES, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY JURISDICTIONS, OR BY COUNTIES. "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING," HE EMPHASIZED, "IS THAT WHICHEVER WAY THE VOTE WAS COUNTED, IT MUST BE KNOWN HOW SCOTLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND VOTED." HE ADDED THAT IT WAS VERY POSSIBLE FOR THE MAJORITY OF VOTES IN THESE THREE AREAS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM TO GO OVERWHELMINGLY AGAINST EC MEMBERSHIP AND TO LEAVE ENGLAND "ISOLATED" IN FAVOR. THIS, HE ADDED, WOULD RAISE SERIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

4. MR. FOOT SAID THAT IF THERE IS A MAJORITY OF VOTERS FAVORING MEMBERSHIP, HE WOULD ACCEPT "THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE" AND HE IMPLIED THAT THERE WAS A SIMILAR MORAL DUTY OF OTHER ANTI-MARKETEERS TO DO SO AS WELL. HE DERIDED THE VIEW THAT THE EC ISSUE WOULD DIVIDE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LABOR PARTY AND HE FELT THAT WHICHEVER WAY THE VOTE
WENT IT WOULD ONCE AND FOR ALL CLEAR THE AIR AND "ACTU-
ALLY BE A GOOD THING FOR THE PARTY." HE ALSO ADDED
THAT IT WAS NOT ONLY THE LABOR PARTY WHICH WAS DIVIDED:
"SO, TOO, ARE THE CONSERVATIVES." HE WENT ON: "I EXPECT
THE LABOR PARTY WILL DO EVERYTHING IT CAN TO BEHAVE IN
A CIVILIZED WAY."

5. AS FOR THE ISSUES IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST MEMBERSHIP,
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HE SAID THE ANTI-MARKETEERS WILL BE ABLE TO CAMPAIGN NOT
ONLY AGAINST THE TERMS, WHATEVER THEY ARE, BUT THE VERY

PRINCIPLE OF CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP. HIS OWN VIEW WAS THAT INITIALLY THE BRITISH SHOULD HAVE SOUGHT A LIMITED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY IN THE FORM OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP. HE INDICATED THAT THE KEY ARGUMENTS OF THE ANTI-MARKETEERS WILL BE ON THE EFFECTS OF EC MEMBERSHIP ON BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGES (MAINLY IN TERMS OF AGRICULTURE).

6. FOOT BELIEVES THAT THERE WILL BE NO ATTEMPT BY THE SPECIAL PARTY CONFERENCE TO INSIST THAT THE CABINET MUST ACCEPT THE VIEWS OF THE CONFERENCE.

7. HE DID NOT FORESEE A SPECIAL TUC CONFERENCE AND EACH TUC AFFILIATE WILL THEREFORE BE FREE TO BE FOR OR AGAINST THE REFERENDUM, INCLUDING THE VOTE WITHIN THE SPECIAL LABOR PARTY CONFERENCE. FOOT ALSO SAID HE WOULD NOT RESIGN OVER THE EC ISSUE AND HE REGRETS THAT SHIRLEY WILLIAMS HAS PLEDGED TO DO SO "BECAUSE SHE IS AN EXTREMELY ABLE MEMBER OF THE CABINET."

8. IF BRITAIN LEAVES THE COMMUNITY, FOOT SAID, "WE WILL HAVE SOME DIFFICULT MONTHS BUT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH ALL OUR FRIENDS IN EUROPE, IN THE UNITED STATES AND ELSEWHERE TO SOLVE THE VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEM FACING ALL OF US."

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